



**Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Wins
2005 EPA Waste Wise Program Champion Award for Waste Reduction**

The Environmental Protection Agency honored the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for its recycling and waste reduction efforts. TDEC's implementation of its comprehensive waste reduction program was voted best of all fifty states by the EPA Waste Wise Committee of judges for the third consecutive year. TDEC leads by example, encouraging organizations across the state to adopt similar waste prevention and recycling programs.

Recycling is a key component of TDEC's waste reduction program. In 2004 TDEC staff held several collection events for employees, to facilitate the reuse of recyclable commodities. Recognizing that supporting recycling markets for this material is important, employees contributed two cases of old cell phones for use in a domestic safety programs and 6,020 lbs of clothing for needy families. Greeting cards, eyeglasses and coat hangers were also donated for reuse. Employees recycled more than 821.6 tons of mixed office paper. TDEC Buy Recycle purchases include recycled content paper, envelopes and file folders.

TDEC's Web site provides waste reduction tips at www.state.tn.us/environment/ea/serp. TDEC's Web page, which is updated regularly, provides waste reduction suggestions such as publishing documents on the Intranet rather than in hard copy format, and putting new labels on old file folders. TDEC encourages employees and the general public to visit this site to obtain ideas. In October, 2005, at the EPA Annual Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., our SERP program was presented the EPA's Program Champion Award.

The SERP program was judged on Largest Scope, Innovation, Recycling Results, Buy Recycling, Education, and Outreach. The 2005 Waste Wise Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony was held at the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia. George Kesterson, SERP Coordinator was on hand to receive the Program Champion Award.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's WasteWise Awards Program recognizes the efforts and achievements of outstanding organizations with Program Champion, Partner, Challenge Partner, Climate Change Partner, and Endorser of the Year Awards. WasteWise offers awards to provide organizations national recognition for their WasteWise achievements.

EPA was proud to honor TDEC for these extraordinary accomplishments. Tennessee was the only state, and one of 10 organizations, to receive a Program Champion Award at this event.

WasteWise is a free and voluntary partnership program launched by EPA in 1994. The program provides guidance and recognition to more than 1,300 participating organizations working to find practical methods to reduce municipal solid waste and improve financial performance. TDEC has been a member of WasteWise since 1999.

For more information about EPA's WasteWise program, please visit the WasteWise Web site at www.epa.gov/wastewise or contact the WasteWise Helpline at 800 EPA-WISE (372-9473).

We continue to grow in our recycling efforts, from its beginning in 1990, our SERP program, has continually increased recycling of mixed office paper. Through 2004 we have recycled 13,095.9 tons, received revenues of \$87,343.03, and saved \$392,877.00 in avoided landfill cost. Through the state's paper recycling efforts, we have saved over 770 trees over the last 14 years. In 2004 we recycled 1,174 pounds of aluminum, and 586 pounds of PETE plastics. "I am very proud to have been in on the ground floor to see our recycling efforts pay off" according to George Kesterson, SERP Coordinator.

Since the inception of our SERP program we have increased our Nashville recycling locations to over 50 buildings, added Chattanooga, Johnson City, Knoxville facilities, and the University of Tennessee Knoxville facilities. We also have recycling for state employees in Columbia, Cookeville, Jackson, Jamestown, and Oak Ridge. We are currently in the process of adding State Parks and Welcome Centers to our list of recycling locations.

In addition to maintaining an employee directory, we continuously update information on our Household Hazardous Waste Events, Tire Sites, and Used Oil Sites. Our Web site also includes a pollution prevention page for the public that includes various solid waste prevention ideas.

We encourage state employees to visit our waste reduction Web page. We send them e-mails that include excerpts from the page to entice them to visit it. Many recycling activities are included on this Web page. We continue to have a successful "Green For Good Program" for recycling other commodities such as eyeglasses, coat hangers, batteries, printer cartridges, greeting cards, cell phones, and florescent bulbs.